



**TO:** House Health Policy Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Fletcher, Director of Advocacy  
**DATE:** December 5, 2018  
**RE:** Support for Senate Bill 492 – Oral Anti-Cancer Treatment Fairness

Thank you, Chairman Vaupel and members of the committee. My name is Ken Fletcher and I am the Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association in Michigan. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 492 – which will provide fairness for cancer treatment options.

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health organization in the United States, representing 33 million Americans with lung disease including over 1.4 million in Michigan.

The Lung Association strongly supports Senate Bill 492, which will benefit cancer patients around the state by limiting patients' out-of-pocket costs for oral anti-cancer medications.

Intravenous/infused cancer medications are typically covered under a health plan's medical benefit, with patients responsible for a copayment each treatment. Orally administered cancer medications are covered under an insurance plan's pharmacy benefit, where many of these drugs are placed on a "specialty" tier of a prescription formulary. The out-of-pocket cost to the patient can often equal hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each month; a price tag that restricts access to life-saving oral anti-cancer therapies for an untold number of cancer patients. Senate Bill 492 would require health plans to provide the same level of coverage for oral anti-cancer medications as they do for IV/infused anti-cancer medications.

There have been dramatic changes in the past several years as research has allowed the development of newer anti-cancer medications that are available in pill form. Between 25%-30% of new anti-cancer treatments in the research pipeline will only be available in pill form, making oral therapies an increasingly important component of cancer treatment for a host of cancers. With the advances in cancer treatment over the last decade, many of these innovative therapies are already the standard of care and for some cancers the only treatment that works.

Oral anti-cancer therapies are often more convenient for patients and can be taken at home, requiring less time off from work and less travel time to and from medical facilities. However, this isn't about choice and convenience to the patient, but what is medically necessary and in the best interest of the patient. Nearly all of the oral anti-cancer medications currently in use do not have an IV or generic equivalent and are specifically indicated as the first and most effective treatment for a range of cancers, making affordability to the patient even more important.

Michigan is one of only seven states left in the United States that have not passed this important legislation. The Lung Association ask that you vote Senate Bill 492 out of committee today and send it to the full House of Representatives for consideration before the end of the year. Cancer patients cannot wait another legislative session to receive fairness when it comes to cancer treatment options.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Fletcher,  
Director of Advocacy  
[Ken.fletcher@lung.org](mailto:Ken.fletcher@lung.org)